

No. 23.

Price One Penny.

ONE PENNY WEEKLY.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

STANFIELD HALL.

By J. F. SMITH,

Author of "Minnigrey," "Woman and Her Master," &c.



Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT, R.A.
AND OTHER EMINENT ARTISTS.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED AT THE "LONDON JOURNAL" OFFICE,
12 and 13, FETTER LANE.

With No. 1 was Presented Gratis No. 2.

No 23

Page One

STANFIELD HALL

STANFIELD HALL

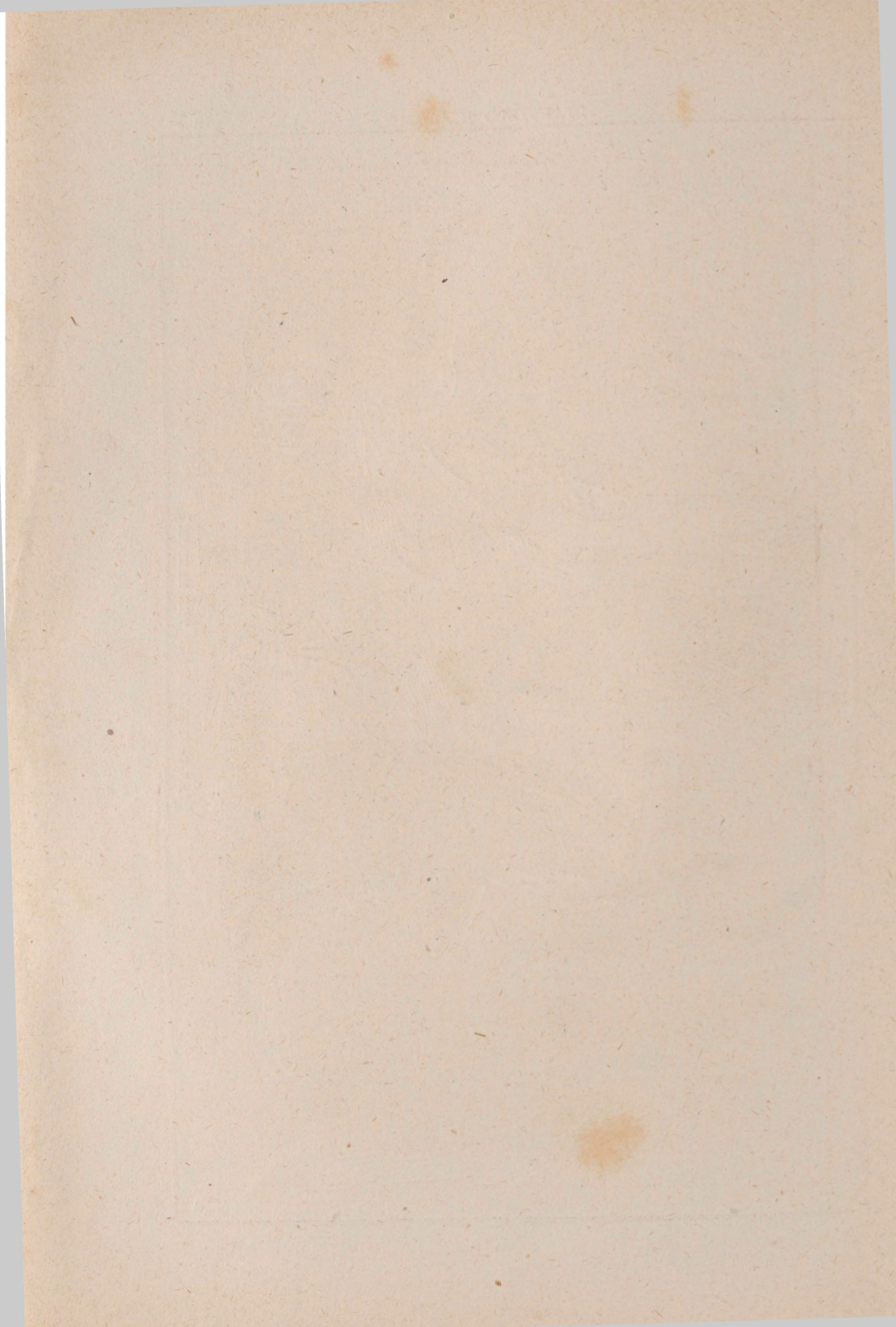
STANFIELD HALL

STANFIELD HALL

10



STANFIELD HALL.



his momentary triumph, something whispered to De Gael that truth would yet be heard; and even while listening to the congratulations of the courtiers who once more flocked around him, and the compliments of the members of the council, his spirit sank within him. The coldness of the queen during the evening banquet to which he was invited was remarked by all; she shuddered visibly as his lips pressed her reluctantly extended hand; and it was clear to all, however the king and nobles might esteem his truth, that Matilda's heart was enlisted in the cause of her unhappy countryman.

At an early hour her majesty quitted the circle, and her departure was followed by an encouraging smile from her husband, who remained, however, for some time after her, in deep conversation with William de Neville, the aged Constable of the Tower, a man whose fidelity to his prince was above all suspicion, and on whom Henry looked as on a second father.

"I'll do it, sire," whispered the old man, hesitatingly; "but 'tis against my judgment. Heaven grant we both repent not of it; but be it as you will."

As the knight concluded his remonstrance, he bowed and left the presence. With his departure a weight seemed to be removed from Henry's soul. Calling for a cup of wine, he drained it to the dregs in honour of his queen, and many a gallant lip and heart responded to the pledge.

Whilst the banquet in the great hall was at its height—for the Tower, at the period of our tale, was both a fortress and a palace—two persons, closely disguised, were threading the cold, damp passages which conducted to the prison of our hero. One was the aged Constable, to whom alone the clue was confided of the various secret entrances and means of egress from the prison, used more frequently for purposes of tyranny and death than freedom to the unfortunate and innocent. His companion was the generous queen, whose prayers and tears had won from Henry the liberty of his prisoner.

On entering the dungeon, they found our hero sleeping on the ground as calmly as an infant sleeps upon its mother's breast. The Constable was surprised, for it was not often that his captives slept.

"And can this man be guilty?" whispered Matilda to her companion, as she gazed upon Ulrick's placid features. Such, believe me, is not the sleep of those whose waking thoughts are of murder and of treason. I should like to compare the Saxon's slumbers with those of his accuser."

"'Tis hard to judge," replied the knight; "for who can read the heart of man?—it is a mystery even to the angels nearest the throne of God. He who framed alone can comprehend it. But time presses; morning must not dawn upon our enterprise and see

it unaccomplished. 'Tis strange," he added, with a smile, "that William de Neville, who bore the Conqueror's standard at Hastings, should be aiding a Saxon to escape from Norman justice!—few would believe it."

"Say, rather," replied his companion, "aiding thy king to pay his debt of gratitude. Yon sleeper saved his life, and all of Rolla's race are not alike ungrateful."

"Enough, 'tis Henry's will," observed the old man; "that hath ever been my law. What ho!" he added, in a louder tone, "Ulrick, sir knight, awake."

The sleeping man slowly opened his eyes, not with that sudden start with which unquiet guilt springs from its restless couch, but with the composure which a fearless conscience gives.

"What would you?" he exclaimed. "Hath the night passed so soon? Well, I am ready."

"Ready for what?" demanded the Constable, with a look of surprise.

"For aught which pleases Heaven," replied Ulrick; "for beyond the tortures and the cruelties with which man goads his fellows, I behold the spirit's triumph and the freed soul's emancipation, plains of eternal light and waving palms; long-silent voices whisper in mine ear, 'Welcome at last to peace.'"

"To liberty as well!" exclaimed Matilda, raising her veil. "The path is free, the dungeon door unbarred. Away at once. Use fortune while thou mayst."

"The queen!" said the astonished prisoner, gracefully bending his knee; "what errand brings an angel's presence to this dreary dungeon?"

"To pay the debt thy grateful monarch owes—to set thee free," replied the generous woman; "to preserve a father for his helpless child, an avenger for the outraged Saxon honour."

Ulrick's natural hesitation to fly and leave a branded name behind him was overruled by the allusion to his infant Myrra, and the hope of one day returning to prove his innocence and avenge his murdered race. He suffered himself, therefore, to be conducted by the aged constable to the boat which by Henry's orders waited at the Tower-stairs to convey him to Normandy, where he soon afterwards joined a band of Crusaders on their march to Palestine; where, in knightly action under the burning sun of Syria, he endeavoured for a while to forget the wrongs and sorrows which drove him from his native land.

With Ulrick's disappearance the last barrier to the triumph of the infamous Ralph de Gael was removed; for whatever might be Henry's secret opinion of his services, and the truth of the conspiracy which he had alleged against the Saxons, he was too politic to express it; seeing that it was firmly believed by the great Norman barons, to whom he was chiefly indebted for his crown,

and whom (such was their power) it might have been dangerous to offend.

* * * * *

Ten years had elapsed since our hero's departure from England, during which period the oppression and tyranny of the worthless governor of the Angles had risen beyond human forbearance. The eyes of the suffering people, vavasours and franklins, were, in the absence of Ulrick, all turned towards Arad, whose watchful prudence had hitherto defeated every attempt to surprise or to subdue him. Men's minds were in this unsettled state when it became gradually whispered that midnight assemblies were being held on Monkshold Heath, and in the Druid's cave at Whitlingham, in which many of the inhabitants of the city joined. These rumours were not long in reaching the ears of the suspicious Ralph, whose spies were everywhere, and he provisioned the stronghold of Norwich Castle in expectation of the approaching outbreak.

Amongst the few national festivals which the oppressed Saxons still continued to celebrate was the anniversary of St. Edward, on which occasion the elder nobles met to exchange the courtesies of life, and the younger ones and commons to indulge in knightly sports, archery, wrestling, and quarter-staff—exercises in which few peoples could excel them. Arad, attended by a more numerous train than usual, was one of the last to reach the heath where the assembly was held. The spot marked out was an undulating plain broken by hills, now forming part of the inclosed lands of Thorpe, extending from the chapel of St. William in the wood down to the river's bank. The arrival of the man whom the oppressed Saxons looked upon as their leader was hailed with shouts of joy, and "Long live the valiant Arad," and "Success to the Lord of Ormsby," echoed far and near.

The aged chief was attended by his only son and heir Edward, and his nephew Ethwold of the Rath, a young man to whom he had been guardian.

It was observed that the young men were unremitting in their attentions to a fair girl who rode in the midst of the train, and who was received by the more aged Saxons with tokens of affection and respect. The maiden was no other than Myrra, who, from the period of her father's exile, had shared the home and paternal love of Arad, and whom rumour had long since assigned as the destined bride of either his son or nephew, for both the young men loved her, and hence the looks of jealous rivalry which occasionally passed between them; but the open-hearted, generous Edward was evidently the favoured lover. A shade of sadness passed over the features of the exile's daughter as she returned the greetings of her friends, for to her the projected outbreak was no secret, and she knew not how soon the home of her adoption might be made a

desert, and the friends who had protected her reduced, like her gallant father, to misery and exile.

As the day proceeded, the people noted with great satisfaction that one by one their leaders slowly retired to the depths of the wood which skirted the place of their assembly, to deliberate, they fondly trusted, on the means of redressing the wrongs beneath which they groaned, and throwing off a yoke as humiliating as it was burthensome to them. Let it not be imagined that all the nobles and franklins who were present at what might not inappropriately be called the council of the Angles were unanimous in their views. Some were restrained by their doubts of success, or the more worldly consideration of personal security; others were content to live on any terms, however vile or degrading.

Considerable uneasiness existed amongst the wavering and timid at the presence of a tall war-worn pilgrim, who stood by Arad's side, and to whom alone, of all the assembly, he seemed personally known. The red cross on his shoulder denoted he had served in Palestine; and the golden spurs upon his heels vouched for his knightly rank. Some whispered that he was a spy, a supposition instantly rejected by those who gazed upon his gallant bearing, and the evident recognition of him by their brother nobles.

The business of the day was opened by Arad, who, in a speech replete with energy, drew their attention to the condition of their unhappy country, to the continued oppressions of Ralph de Gael, and the little hope of redress at the hands of the monarch, who, since the death of his Saxon queen, Matilda, had given himself entirely up to his Norman ministers and councillors. "Are we," continued the aged chief, "once more to draw the sword for Saxon independence, or yield our necks, without one further effort, to the debasing yoke our masters place upon us? Shall we decide to live as freemen, or to die as slaves?"

There was a pause. The assembly felt the importance of the reply they were called upon to make, and remained silent. Ethwold of the Rath, the speaker's nephew, was the first to break it. Though not naturally a coward, he was selfish. Hitherto the brand of the Conqueror had not assailed his hearth—added to which, the importance which his rival cousin would obtain in Myrra's eyes, should the insurrection prove successful, at once determined him. Briefly and confidently he spoke of the hopelessness, the madness of the attempt, and called upon the meeting to disperse, ere the knowledge of their designs should give their rulers fresh pretext for further spoliation.

With a triumphant smile Ethwold remarked the effect his speech produced. Many of the vavasours and petty nobles were retiring, when the deep-toned voice of the pilgrim arrested their ignoble purpose.

"Men!" he exclaimed, dashing into the midst of them. "Can

ye be men, and tamely thus resign all chance of freedom? Are ye so debased, ye cast the sword aside and kiss your chains? Prove yourselves worthy of your fathers' fame, and free your daughters from the Norman's lust. Your future sons, drawing the love of freedom from their mothers' breasts, nobly shall defend the rights their fathers bled to win, the stream of life with nobler impulse beat, and one brave deed regenerate our race."

Few as were the impassioned words of the speaker, they found an echo in the hearts even of those who wavered. Men crowded around him—the young with enthusiasm, the old in admiration. But Ethwold was not a man to be easily silenced: he was one of those who, if not eloquent, at least are plausible.

"Who is this stranger," he demanded, "who takes upon him to give lessons unto men and nobles? Beware," he added, "lest this seeming zeal should hide a traitor."

"Traitor!" repeated the pilgrim. "England! my own, my father's land, have I for thee wandered o'er Asia's burning sands, or froze amid the horrors of the North, thus to be branded with traitor's name? Hear me, Saxons," he continued, "'tis not the first time ye have hung upon my words, or followed my broad pennon to the field. Exiled for freedom and my country's rights, for years I wandered 'neath a burning sun, yet felt it not—the fire was in my brain; oft o'er the pathless deserts of the East my steps have strayed—the simoom harmed me not; in storm, in danger, in the battle's heat, I courted death in vain. Once, when Despair usurped fair Reason's throne, I gained the craggy mountain's top—most height, and would have plunged into the abyss beneath, but at that moment some spirit whispered 'England might be free!' My heart, my sword, were all my country's claim, and Ulrick would not rob her of her right."

The shout of the astonished Saxons at the announcement of their banished hero's name rang far and wide. Many a gallant heart beat with admiration at the sight of him, and eager hands were stretched to welcome him. In the midst of their enthusiasm, however, a voice was heard at whose sound all gave way. The youthful Myrra had heard her father's name. Gliding like a spirit of light and beauty through the circle which surrounded him, she sank upon her knees, her voice shaking with emotion: all she could find strength to utter was:

"Your blessing—your blessing, father—for your long-parted child."

As the stern warrior gazed upon the kneeling scraph at his feet, the thoughts of other days and other ties came over him. Placing his hand upon her head, he answered, while tears coursed each other down his manly cheek:

"Sweet as the dew which fell on Israel's race my blessing rest upon thee, thou only blossom of my marriage bed the hand of

tyranny hath spared me. Look on her, chiefs," he added, addressing the franklins, who had respectfully drawn back not to intrude upon so sacred a meeting; "say, should a form like this give birth to slaves? should beauties rare as these become the Norman's prey? Here, on the hills where free your father's trod, I call upon you, in the sacred name of freedom—call you to burst wide your bonds—cast back to earth the fetters which enthrall you—renounce the oppressor's yoke, and rise erect and free as God and nature's chartered laws have made you."

One wild enthusiastic cry for liberty was the result of the appeal; men drew their swords, and swore no longer to hold their lives at their masters' pleasures; even Ethwold, carried away by the feelings of the moment, joined in the shout for war.

"Noble Ulrick," he exclaimed, "forgive me. I knew not the nature my suspicions wronged. Let Myrra's hand become the pledge of amity between us; my fortune and my friends will then be thine; my vassals know no other leader, my inexperienced years no other guide."

It needed not the pale cheek of Myrra, or the ill-suppressed indignation of the youthful Edward, whose imploring eyes were fixed on Ulrick, to induce his generous nature how to decide. Drawing the trembling girl yet nearer to his heart, as if to shield her even from the outrage of such a proposition, her father answered with a bitterness and scorn to which in other years his lips were strangers:

"Yield her to thee! Consign her pure and spotless to thy arms! Rather would I strike her to my feet! rather behold her perish in the pile in which her sister fell, than yield her beauties to a willing slave! Go," he added, with an expression of, if possible, increased contempt,—“go, count thy gold, and view thy hoards increase! Breed sons to swell thy Norman master's train, and daughters to be victims of their lust! Go, live securely, but thy nation's scorn!"

Slowly, and with a look of unutterable hate, Ethwold withdrew from the assembly, the eyes of which were turned reproachfully upon him. Curses were on his lip, yet he spake them not. Revenge, like a vulture, was gnawing at his heart; and he resolved, even at the sacrifice of those who shared his blood, it should be gratified.

The same day saw him closeted with Ralph de Gael, to whom, however, with the usual cunning of his nature, he only half-confided the danger which threatened him: spoke of the meditated rising of the Saxons; but forbore to name Ulrick as their chief, promising, however, to deliver him into the hands of a party of his men, provided he might retain his daughter as his sole reward. The double traitor was in some degree forced to this; for, without the aid of the Norman soldiers, he knew it would be impossible to complete the outrage he meditated, as he well knew no Saxon could

be found to lay a hand upon the lord of Stanfield—such was the influence of his name—the love which his gallant fame and devotion to his country had inspired. The compact was accepted, the necessary force placed at his disposal, and Ethwold retired from the castle bound to the bidding of his master like a worthless hound.

The name of Ulrick, and the shouts which welcomed it, spread far and near amongst the excited Saxons. The games were rapidly broken up, and the serfs and peasants burst in upon the circle hitherto reserved for their masters; all were eager once more to gaze upon the man whose name had been the watchword of their youth, whose arm the protection of their homes, and whose memory in their grateful hearts had survived even his services. In the enthusiasm of the moment all distinction of rank was forgotten, and it became necessary, men were so mingled together, for the leaders to retire to mature their plans ere the news of Ulrick's return should be noised abroad—a secret which, after the public recognition of his person, could not be long concealed. In the hurried council which followed, it was decided that the exile should at once proceed to Stanfield to raise the ancient vassals of his house, who, writhing under the exactions of their new master, would rise to a man, and strike for their ancient lord and freedom.

That very evening, near the old cross where the road divided from Cotessey to Wymondham, an aged woman, leaning on an oaken staff, might have been seen watching the setting sun, whose last rays kissed the graceful spire of the cathedral, and crowned with a flood of golden light its splendid pinnacles; her quick, restless eye was directed to a copse of stunted beech and brushwood near, from which a steel-clad Norman man-at-arms might occasionally be seen peeping, casting down the road impatient glances, such as the hungry wolf might cast upon its loitering prey.

“Ay,” muttered the old woman, resuming her occupation of gathering herbs, “wait; he will not tarry long. The noble stag and timid fawn are both within the toils. First, the mother,” she added, counting with her fingers, “then the wife and eldest born, and now the sire, and the last shoot of his doomed, blighted race. Blood will be shed. I feel—I scent it. I saw the corpse-lights flitter in the ruins of Stanfield—a sure token of death in its lordly line. He comes, the victim to the sacrifice—the eagle to the archer's aim.”

At this moment Ethwold and several of his followers left their ambush to secrete themselves behind the cross, in order that they might secure their prey between two nets, and so cut off all chance of escape.

“What dost thou here, wretched hag?” exclaimed the haughty Saxon. “Away! we want no spy upon our deeds. Hence, ere my

archers lash thee with their bow-strings till the flesh falls from thy accursed bones."

"There needs small wit to guess the deed," replied the beldame, sharply, "when Saxon joins with Norman to oppress his country. Hell is sure to register it, and Heaven to punish it."

A laugh from the men-at-arms stung the traitor at whom the bitter sneer was levelled. Striking the speaker with the back of his weapon brutally over the temple, he once more bade her begone.

"Ethwold," screamed the hag, in a voice rendered painfully sharp by passion, as she wiped the blood which trickled down her haggard features, "thou art a doomed man! Saxon and Norman shall alike reject thee; the gallows-tree shall end thy vile career; the pie shall chatter on thy fleshless skull, and the winds whistle through thy unburied bones. Craven and traitor, the curse of her whose words ne'er fall to earth be on thee! Thou hast struck a woman; by a woman's hand thy fate shall be accomplished."

Ere the astonished Ethwold could give orders to secure her, the hag had fled into the wood, whose intricate windings forbade all hope of a pursuit.

It was with bitter, sad reflections that Ulrick and his daughter, whose tears had drawn from her father a reluctant permission to accompany him to Stanfield, approached the once happy home of love and childhood. A thousand recollections rose in the mind of each as they remarked the well remembered cross which divided the two domains. Both, as by a mutual impulse, reined their steeds to repeat an Ave! for the safe conclusion of their journey. The action was too favourable for the intentions of the ambushed ruffians to escape their notice. In an instant the travellers were surrounded, and the male rider disarmed.

"What would you, masters?" he exclaimed, taking them for robbers, "gold? I have but little, and to that ye are freely welcome. What," he added, seeing that they were about to bind his arms, "would ye offer violence to a pilgrim of the Cross?"

"Ethwold!" shrieked Myrra, as the eyes of the triumphant villain encountered hers, "betrayed! betrayed!"

At the name of the perjured Saxon, the fearful truth flashed at once in all its horror upon the mind of the unhappy father. Bursting with a frantic effort from the men-at-arms who held him, he sprang upon the traitor, whose life, unarmed though the indignant Ulrick was, would have fallen a just sacrifice, had not numbers overpowered him.

"It is accomplished," murmured our hero to himself; "man may not struggle with his destiny."

There was something so calm and dignified in the resignation of their captive, so touching in the tears and the affectionate caresses of his fair child, that even the rude Normans felt moved, and conducted them to the city with respect and silence.

Ethwold, to avoid being seen with the party, and his treason to his countrymen thereby at once made known, lingered behind, triumphing in the anticipated possession of the high-minded girl who had rejected him, and the despair of his rival cousin, whom he hated.

"Now, then," he exclaimed, "I can meet scorn with scorn and hate with hate. Ulrick dishonoured me before my nation; the scaffold soon will claim him. Myrra preferred the boyish love of a mere stripling to my fervent vows—ha! ha! ha! Soon shall she sue and learn to wait my smiles, come at my beck, and tremble at my frown. I'll break her haughty spirit," he added, "and find more pleasure in the task than e'en her love could yield me."

"You must be brief, then," whispered a voice near him, "for your courtship will prove but short."

He started, and found the hag whom he had so brutally treated grinning maliciously at his side. The first impulse of the haughty franklin was to repeat the chastisement; but on a motion of her hand, he was disarmed by a dozen wretched-looking men, who had crept through the underwood and gradually surrounded him, and who immediately hurried him from the high road into the depth of the forest.

"Dogs!" he exclaimed, as one of them drew from his vest a rope, "would you bind me?"

"Ay," replied the hag; "bind thee where Satan's hand alone shall loose thee—where thy crimes long since should have consigned thee—to the gallows-tree!"

"Thou darest not, woman," he answered. "Knowest thou who I am? Slaves! I will rack ye limb from limb for this. Hear me," he added, seriously alarmed for his safety, for one of the ruffians had already made a noose at one end of the cord, and advanced with the intention of placing it round his neck, "I am rich; I'll buy my life with gold—gold, which is the master-key to pleasure—gold, which will purchase wine and beauty—all that men's hearts desire, all that their wishes can frame."

"All but thy life!" screamed the woman; "for couldst thou coin the earth in gold, and count it down before me, I'd trample on thy offer. Do you hesitate?" continued the fury, observing that some of the outlaws were pondering on the Saxon's offer. "Fools! would the man who sold his country e'er keep faith with you? Obey me, or I break all ties between us—denounce ye to your Norman tyrants' mercies, and leave ye to your fate."

The outlaws, who were dependent on the hag for the necessary supplies of food, and whose influence over them was still further increased by her skill in wounds, not unfrequently called into requisition in the hazardous life they led, hesitated no longer. Despite his yells and frantic struggles, Ethwold was attached to

the fatal tree. As soon as the men retired he caught with his unbound hands to the branch to which he was suspended, and for a few moments procrastinated his fate.

"A priest, a priest!" he shrieked. "Let me not perish body and soul. Save me, woman, and I will be thy slave, thy hound; chain me in the deep centre of the earth, feed me on carrion, use me as a footstool, spare my life, but for repentance."

"Ha, ha, ha! how the hang-dog howls!"

"Mercy! mercy!"

"The pie shall chatter on thy fleshless skull!" repeated the fury.

"But for one hour to pray."

"The winds shall whistle through thy fleshless bones!" she added.

"No hope—no hope!"

"None!" exclaimed the aged woman, sternly. "My word is kept; thou hast struck a woman, and a woman's hand consigns thee to thy doom."

Raising her long staff, she struck the struggling wretch upon his hands till the repeated blows forced him to let go his desperate hold, but not till bruised bones and mangled flesh had lost all power of supporting him. He fell with a heavy jerk, and, after a few convulsive struggles, Ethwold, the betrayer of his country, swung a corpse; cut off in the moment of his triumph by the agency of a weak creature, whom in his strength he could have crushed, and whom in the wantonness of his power he had treated cruelly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RALPH DE GAEL paced the great hall of the castle, impatiently awaiting the arrival of his prisoners. Had he been aware who the redoubted leader was, he would hardly have entrusted to a subordinate the task of securing his person; for, despite the number of years which had elapsed since the exile of our hero, conscience—that busy monitor—at times whispered in his ear that Ulrick might return to exact fearful retribution for his murdered wife, his desolated home, and outraged honour; and the thought would poison the wine-cup and arrest the smile upon his lip. Prudence had prevented his ever making public his marriage with the guilty, the unhappy Ethra; the greater parts of the estates of Stanfield had become his by confiscation, and the knowledge of his union with the child of the man whom he had so cruelly persecuted could have answered no other purpose than to cover his name with additional infamy. The betrayer and betrayed lived still: her remarkable beauty, which even sorrow and remorse had failed to touch, held the tyrant in a bond which habitude had contributed to rivet; for,

although his infidelities were frequent, they were carefully concealed from the eyes of his injured wife.

"Where stay the loiterers?" he demanded of an esquire who at a respectful distance awaited his commands. "Night hath already fallen. Can the Saxon have escaped me? Who leads the men?"

"Herbert," replied the officer. "A cool head, my lord, and a still better sword."

"I know his qualities," interrupted the impatient Norman, who loved not to hear the praise even of the instruments most faithful to his crimes. "Let the torturers be summoned. I'll wring confession from the Saxon's lips. No mercy, no weakness now. The cord and axe shall be each rebel's doom. I'll crush the traitors like a nest of vipers 'neath my iron heel."

The warders, however, cut short his threats by announcing the arrival of his prisoners, who were instantly conducted by their captors to his presence. Ulrick, although heavily chained, still supported the steps of his fair child; his paternal arm encircled her waist, half-veiling her form in the folds of his dark mantle. Time and the burning sun of Syria had so changed him, that even the eye of hate, whose glance is often keener than that of love, failed to recognise him. His step was erect, in the conscious integrity of his life and the dignity of his nature; his eye, like that of an imprisoned eagle, shrank not from the gaze of his captor, which, on the contrary, gradually quailed beneath its glance.

"Who art thou?" said Ralph de Gael, in a much less haughty tone than he usually assumed towards his victims, for the bearing of the soldier of the Cross had involuntarily awed him.

"A Saxon," was the reply.

"Humph! I guessed as much," interrupted the Norman, "from thy insolent bearing. What else?"

"Thy foe!" added Ulrick, sternly, "thy deadly foe. Mine is no common hate. I tell thee, Ralph de Gael, were we both struggling on the wave, with but one plank between us and eternity, my hand should dash that plank aside rather than float with thee."

"Father, father!" whispered Myrra, alarmed at the effect his words produced upon the astonished tyrant, "patience, patience for mine and for thy country's sake."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the surprised Norman, for it was not often that such words had fallen upon his ears, more used to prayers and supplications than reproaches from his victims; and what cause?"

"What cause!" iterated our hero, approaching him; "have I not told thee that I am a Saxon; and canst thou ask the cause? Look well around thee; view the groaning earth, which once teemed plenty to her children's toil, made wild and barren 'neath the Norman sway; view well the happy homes, the antique

towers, in which of old the Saxon lived and ruled, now desolate beneath the Norman brand. Dost thou still ask the cause?"—and here the expression of the captive's eye, as he repeated the question, was like the forked lightning's point, or the concentrated glance of the fierce basilisk. "Again look forth, and view our offspring, children of our blood, fettered like slaves to pamper up your pride, or made the victims of their tyrants' lust. Our country lost, our homes profaned, our trampled liberties, our broken hearts—all, all proclaim the cause."

For a few moments Ralph de Gael remained pale with rage, and speechless from the mere impotence of passion. There was a tone, too, in the speaker's voice which jarred upon his soul like the return in manhood's years of childhood's half-remembered terror. He felt convinced that he and his prisoner had met before; but memory, so changed was his victim, failed to whisper where. His pride was galled at the proud glance beneath which his own had quailed.

"Fool!" he at last replied; "ours is the right of conquest; victory places the yoke upon your necks, and justifies our sway."

"Nothing can justify a tyrant's sway," answered the prisoner calmly. "Freedom is man's inalienable right, stamped by the Godhead on his form when he went forth creation's chartered lord. Nor conquest's law, nor deed on vellum sealed, nor e'en man's own assent, can ratify its loss. Though ages more than e'er the world has seen had passed since first your fetters bound us down, yet from the moment that we spurned our chain, and felt our rights, humanity's lost charter was restored. Wretch!" he added, "the measure of thy cruelties is full—a people rise in their indignant strength—despite thy guards, thy crouching slaves, their justice yet shall reach thee! When thou shalt see this bloodstained hold, the seat of thy dark tyranny and crime, a prey to flames—when frantic fear shall prey upon thy heart, and wild remorse call Heaven in vain for mercy, think on the wrongs of Ulrick, and despair."

"Ulrick!" repeated Ralph aloud. His cheek blanched as he beheld the secret terror of his life before him; then muttering to himself, he uttered, "'Twas instinct, then, which made me shudder as I looked upon him."

"Wretch!" echoed his victim, "where is the home thy sword hath made a desert?—the wife thy bloodhounds hunted to the grave?—the child that perished in the blazing pile? Deep in the grave I may forget my wrongs; but whilst one spark of waking life remains, 'twill be employed in precious, dear revenge. Off, vile chains!" he added, "more terrible than death. Oh! for the lightning's arm to strike thee!"

"The unhappy man became so excited by the recollection of his wrongs that, unarmed as he was, he rushed upon the destroyer of

his happiness, and raising his chains as a weapon above his head, doubtless would have inflicted a summary vengeance upon the tyrant, had not his guards restrained him. One more zealous than the rest held the point of his sword at the throat of the fallen Saxon, and waited but a nod or look from his unworthy chief to strike—a sign which would most probably have been given, had not Myrra, alarmed for her father's life, forgot the natural timidity of her nature and the horror which the name of her enemy inspired. Kneeling at the Norman's feet, she even clasped his hand, nay, bathed it with her tears, and implored him by every sentiment of pity and humanity to spare a being whose heart his cruelties had already crushed, whose brain was maddened by the memory of his sorrows. It would have been impossible for any one, even less the slave than Ralph de Gael of beauty, to gaze unmoved upon so fair a suppliant;—her ripening form, like the swelling bud of the fragrant rose, gave delicious promise of its bursting beauties; her blue eyes, like sapphires, gemmed in tears, were turned imploringly upon him; while from her prostrate position his licentious eye caught the rich contour of her heaving bosom. It was long since he had gazed on aught so fair, so fresh, so beautiful; and the heart of the voluptuary throbbled with an emotion to which it had been for years a stranger.

"Rise!" exclaimed Ulrick, who beheld with a sickening sensation the looks of lawless admiration which the Norman cast upon the innocent dove trembling within his clutches. "Plead not to him for mercy, lest from the tomb thy mother's shade indignant rise and curse the child who bends to the destroyer of her race. Thinkst thou," he added, "I could value life as that man's loathsome gift?"

"Fear not," said the tyrant; "thou shalt have thy wish—the trial first, and then the headsman's office. Away with him to a dungeon! Guard him, fellows, as you would your lives; your heads are on your faith."

"To a dungeon!" replied Ulrick; "even there my spirit still can scorn thee. Come, Myrra," he added, opening his fettered arms to receive his terror-stricken child; "even in a prison a father's heart can shield thee—a father's breast pillow thy innocent head."

"Not so!" exclaimed Ralph, with a sardonic smile; "it were a stain upon our chivalry to consign so fair a prisoner to so foul a den; our castle hath a bower more suited to her beauty and her years."

"No, no!" shrieked Myrra; for as he spoke a nameless terror struck upon her heart. "My father's dungeon, the scaffold, or the grave—anywhere with him. I dare not—will not—quit my father's side."

Despite her tears and entreaties, despite the desperate efforts of

her distracted father, the unhappy girl was torn from his protecting arms, and placed by the guards in the hands of their chief, whose admiration of her beauty was, if possible, increased by the charm of its sorrows, and who listened to Ulrick's frantic curse with a triumphant laugh.

At a wave of his hand the captive was dragged by overwhelming numbers to his dungeon, and the helpless Myrra left in the power of the object of her terror.

It is impossible to say, in the excitement of the moment, to what excess his passions might have hurried him, had not the frightful convulsions into which his victim fell on beholding him approach for awhile proved her protection. Calling to some of the female attendants of Ethra, he ordered them to bear her to a chamber remote from the apartment of his wife, from whom, on peril of his wrath, they were to conceal the knowledge of her being in the castle.

Ralph de Gael knew how much he was detested, not only by the Saxon franklins and nobles whom he had oppressed, but by the inhabitants of the city generally, whom his exactions had on more than one occasion driven into unsuccessful outbreaks against his authority, the suppression of which had served as pretexts for fresh spoliation. But the present danger was of unusual gravity. Nobles and serfs, peasants and artisans, all seemed leagued against him. In his arrogance he had so offended the neighbouring Norman nobles that even from them he could count on faint support. He despatched, therefore, that very night, a message to the king, then holding his Parliament at Bury St. Edmund's, to demand prompt succour, at the same time informing him that the exiled traitor, Ulrick of Stanfield, was his prisoner. A council of war was afterwards called, and means debated to best provide against the threatened attack; for the Norman, whatever might have been his crimes, was no carpet knight, but as prompt in battle as in evil deeds.

Ethra—the neglected, the heartbroken, but still loving Ethra—had on this eventful night remained long after the vesper hymn had ceased, praying in the castle chapel, unheeded and alone; an unusual depression weighed upon her soul, a secret warning of the realisation of those undefined terrors which haunt the predestined and foredoomed. The only light within the sacred place proceeded from the ever-burning lamps before Our Lady's shrine, and as their reflection fell upon the pale but still beautiful features of the penitent, they lit up a picture which a painter might have copied with advantage.

"Peace!" whispered the suppliant. "Holy Mother, pray that my heart finds peace! Pour thou the balm of kind oblivion on its bleeding sorrows! Save me from madness! save me from myself!"

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JOSEPH NEALE

VOLUME I
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE YEAR 1700
PUBLISHED BY
JOSEPH NEALE
NEW-YORK
1846

Ready Tuesday, June 26,
**THE HOLIDAY AND SEASIDE
DOUBLE NUMBER**

OF THE
LONDON JOURNAL

(No. 237),


PRICE TWOPENCE,

In which will be commenced the GRAND ROMANCE—

QUADROONA,

By **PERCY B. ST. JOHN.**

ILLUSTRATED BY SIR JOHN GILBERT, R.A.

 This Story, the best and brightest work ever produced by its talented author, is replete with incident and strong sensational situations. The powerful interest aroused in the first number is unflaggingly maintained to the close. Every reader will be entranced with its perusal, and, we are confident, will recommend it to all friends.

With the same Number is issued the **SPLENDID COMPLETE STORY—**

IN THE HUSH OF THE CORN

By a **POPULAR AUTHOR,**

BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED;

ALSO

**CHARMING VIEWS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF SUMMER RESORTS
AND ALL THE USUAL FEATURES.**

BRADLEY AND CO., 12 and 13, FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.,
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

ORDER AT ONCE.

AND ALL
ORDER